



Statement on H.R. 7201, the Child Care is Infrastructure Act

Child care is an essential component of national and local economies, helping parents of young children remain in the workforce and achieve economic stability, while also supporting the learning and development of young children. The coronavirus pandemic has brought both the challenges providers face and the essential nature of the child care industry to the forefront, and without further investment, the child care industry faces irreversible harm. Now is the time for further investment to help the industry both survive the crisis and build back stronger.

Bipartisan Policy Center Action applauds Representative Katherine Clark (D-MA) for her leadership on addressing long-term child care needs that will begin to help the market thrive as it reaches the other side of this crisis. The Child Care is Infrastructure Act is a positive contribution to the debate by recognizing the various, ongoing needs of the industry and seeking to improve the supply of high-quality child care throughout the country. BPCA is pleased to see this legislation includes several of the BPC Early Childhood Initiative's long-term goals and priorities, including infrastructure grants to improve child safety and various supports for the early childhood workforce.

Infrastructure Grants to Improve Child Care Safety will support both home-based and center-based programs improve the physical conditions of their facilities and support modifications to meet new health and safety guidance in response to COVID-19. Congress has long been dedicated to the health and safety of children, and now more than ever, it is critical that Congress continue to bolster this commitment.

The Early Childhood Educator Loan Assistance Program and **Grants for Early Childhood Educators** would help recruit and retain high-quality staff, and make the profession more attractive. The child care workforce has always been essential, but is too-often forgotten in federal policy. Workers make low-wages, rarely receive benefits, and are largely excluded from existing federal programs to help cover costs of obtaining a degree. Now, more than ever, Congress should recognize the child care industry as the essential workforce it is.

BPC is also encouraged by provisions in the legislation that will study the impact of the Tax Credit for Employer-Provided Child Care, recognize early care and learning facilities as a neighborhood asset in the Housing and Urban Development's Choice Neighborhoods Initiative, and reauthorize the Child Care Access Means Parents in Schools Program.

We strongly urge a bipartisan conversation and debate on these critical topics and commend Rep. Clark for starting the conversation by introducing the Child Care is Infrastructure Act.